

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A steering column apparatus comprising:

a steering shaft having a rear end to which a steering wheel is secured;

a steering column rotatably supporting said steering shaft and being of adjustable length in axial directions thereof together with said steering shaft; and

a telescopic position fixing mechanism operable to fix said steering column to a desired length,

wherein said steering column includes an outer column fixed on a vehicle body side and an inner column telescopically fitted in said outer column,

said telescopic position fixing mechanism includes a lock housing disposed on said outer column, first and second press blocks, each slidably held within a bore of said lock housing, a bolt passing through said first and second press blocks, said first and second press blocks having said bolt non-threadably received therein so as to be slidable on said bolt and being movable toward and away from each other to press and release said inner column so as to fix and release the telescopic position of said steering column, and a press block driving

mechanism operable to move said first and second press blocks toward and away from each other,

    said press block driving mechanism including a first cam provided~~formed~~ on said second press block such that said first cam and said second press block constitute a single integral body, a rotatable cam facing said first cam, a fastening lever used for rotating said rotatable cam, and interval regulating members which regulate an interval between said rotatable cam and said first press block, and a biasing device which biases said first press block and said second press block away from each other.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously Presented) A steering column apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said press block driving mechanism further includes an inclined guide member, formed in said lock housing, to facilitate movement of at least one of said first and second press blocks away from the other.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) A steering column apparatus comprising:

a steering shaft having a rear end to which a steering wheel is secured;

a steering column rotatably supporting said steering shaft and being of adjustable length in axial directions thereof together with said steering shaft, said steering column including an outer column fixed on a vehicle body side and an inner column telescopically fitted in said outer column; and

a telescopic position fixing mechanism operable to fix said steering column to a desired length, said telescopic position fixing mechanism including a lock housing disposed on said outer column, first and second press blocks, each slidably fitted within a bore formed through said lock housing in a vehicle body widthwise direction, a bolt passing through said first and second press blocks, said first and second press blocks having said bolt non-threadably received therein so as to be slidable on said bolt and being movable toward and away from each other to press and release said inner column so as to fix and release the telescopic position of said steering column, and a press block driving mechanism operable to control movement of said first and second press blocks,

wherein said press block driving mechanism includes an interval regulating mechanism having a first regulating member and a second regulating member provided at respective end portions of said bolt so as to regulate movements, along an axis of the bolt, of

said first and second press blocks to a predetermined interval, said first regulating member being in direct contact with said first press block to regulate movement thereof along the bolt axis, a distance adjusting mechanism provided between said second regulating member and said second press block for changing a distance therebetween, said distance adjusting mechanism including a rotatable cam and a fixed cam which is formed on said second press block such that said fixed cam and said second press block constitute a single integral body, an operating lever for operating the rotatable cam of the distance adjusting mechanism to change said distance between said second regulating member and said second press block, and a biasing device which biases said first press block and said second press block away from each other,

wherein when said distance adjusting mechanism is operated to make the distance between said second regulating member and said second press block larger, the first and second press blocks are moved toward each other so as to press the outer surface of said inner column, and when said distance adjusting mechanism is operated to make the distance between said second regulating member and said second press block smaller, said first and second press blocks are moved away from each other so as to release the pressure on said inner column.

7. (Currently Amended) A steering column apparatus comprising;

a steering shaft having a rear end to which a steering wheel is secured;

a steering column rotatably supporting said steering shaft and being of adjustable length in axial directions thereof together with said steering shaft, said steering column including an outer column fixed on a vehicle body side and an inner column telescopically fitted in said outer column; and

a telescopic position fixing mechanism operable to fix said steering column to a desired length, said telescopic position fixing mechanism including a lock housing disposed on said outer column, first and second press blocks, each slidably fitted within a bore formed through said lock housing in a vehicle body widthwise direction, a bolt passing through said first and second press blocks, said first and second press blocks having said bolt non-threadably received therein so as to be slidable on said bolt and being movable toward and away from each other to press and release said inner column so as to fix and release the telescopic position of said steering column, and a press block driving mechanism operable to control movement of said first and second press blocks,

wherein said press block driving mechanism includes an interval regulating mechanism having a first regulating member and a second regulating member provided at respective

end portions of said bolt so as to regulate movements, along an axis of the bolt, of said first and second press blocks to a predetermined interval, said first regulating member being in direct contact with said first press block to regulate movement thereof along the bolt axis, a first cam fixedly provided on said second press block and fitted slidably on the bolt and formed on said second press block such that said first cam and said second press block constitute a single integral body, a rotatable cam disposed between the first cam and the second regulating member to face said first cam, a fastening lever used for rotating said rotatable cam, and a biasing device which biases said first press block and said second press block away from each other,

wherein when said cams are moved away from each other, said first and second press blocks are moved toward each other so as to press said inner column, and when said cams are moved toward each other, said first and second press blocks are moved away from each other so as to release the pressure on said inner column.